

17.1 Introduction

Papiamentu is spoken on the leeward Netherlands Antilles (Curaçao and Bonaire) and on Aruba, and by migrants from these areas in the Netherlands and elsewhere. The total number of speakers is perhaps 200,000. It is a fairly well established creole, in which a number of newspapers are published, possessing its own literary tradition, an official spelling, and playing some role in the educational system (see chapter 6). In fact, Aruba has one official spelling, more etymological in nature (The sound /k/ for instance, is represented as *k* in words derived from Dutch, and as *c* and *qw* in words derived from Spanish), and Curaçao and Bonaire another one, more phonological in nature (*k* everywhere). Here we use Curaçaoan orthography.

Papiamentu emerged in the second half of the 17th century, and is primarily based on Portuguese and Spanish. Although a number of theories have been proposed for its origin, we will follow Goodman's (1987) account, who stresses the role of the Sephardic Jews, who were expelled from formerly Dutch northern Brazil, and arrived on Curaçao from 1659. The earliest form of Papiamentu is assumed to be largely Portuguese in its lexicon; later extensive contact with Spanish has obscured this early contribution. In addition it has some African and Amerindian vocabulary, as well as words from Dutch and English.

At the end of the 18th century there were 16,000 blacks on the island of Curaçao, both slaves and freedmen, and 5500 whites, including 1500 Sephardic Jews. Of the 2400 slaves in 1683, only 25% worked in the plantations. In the 18th century, the majority of plantations employed 5 slaves or less. The overall impression is that the cradle for Papiamentu was far more a *société de habitation* than a *société de plantation*, to use Chaudenson's terminology (1992; see chapter 2). Thus it is more like the creole of Réunion, which is close to French, in this respect, than like the maroon creoles like Saramaccan or the 'deep' plantation creoles like Sranan or Haitian. In fact, its relative typological distance from Ibero-Romance may need to be explained in terms of the fact that Dutch, and not Spanish or Portuguese, was the colonial language from 1634 onward. Papiamentu is not directly related to another Portuguese-based or Spanish-based creole, though there may be links to the Portuguese element in Saramaccan (Smith 1987).

A priest, Padre Schabel, mentions a kind of 'broken Spanish' in his diary from 1705. The

earliest written attestations in the language date from 1775. Wood (1971) has published a love letter written by a Sephardic Jew from that year, which closely resembles the modern language. There is also a written dialogue between two servants from the same year. In fact, these early written testimonies are the beginning of a long tradition of writing in Papiamentu, including quite a bit of poetry, some popular novels, literary narrative prose, school books, catechisms, and in recent years a number of newspapers and magazines, scholarly texts, educational materials, reglements, etc. An example of the way Papiamentu serves as a urban vernacular is given in the three advertisements from a popular daily newspaper.

Bo ke bende bo auto Hapones?
Bo ta aspirá un bon preis?
PASA AWE MES NA:

rooi catootje auto park

i nos lo kumpré **KESH** mesora!



CARACAS
Tur Wikent!

3 DIA / 3 ANOCHI		4 DIA / 4 ANOCHI	
SALIDA:	REGRESO:	SALIDA:	REGRESO:
(día/mes/año)	(día/mes/año)	(día/mes/año)	(día/mes/año)
Nov. 03	Nov. 06	Nov. 03	Nov. 06
Nov. 05	Nov. 12	Nov. 05	Nov. 12
Nov. 11	Nov. 20	Nov. 11	Nov. 20
Nov. 24	Nov. 21	Nov. 23	Nov. 27
Dic. 01	Dic. 04	Nov. 30	Dec. 04
Dec. 06	Dec. 11	Dec. 07	Dec. 11
Dec. 15	Dec. 18	Dec. 14	Dec. 18

PRECIO GRANDE
(2 o 3 personas)
f. 248.-

PRECIO PEQUEÑO
(2 o 3 personas)
f. 263.-

* Pasajero inf. + bebida sin costo.
* Tipo de traslado por aeropuerto o hotel.
* Transport. por bus aeropuerto/hotel/aviso en aeropuerto.
* Estadia en Hotel PLAZA CATEDRAL.

Jama nos awe mes!!
Tel. 89500 - 89500 - 89511

Sonny Tours

PROMIE

Bo a tende kaba di Brand Bonus polis?
Brand Bonus polis ta e polis nobo introduci pa Promie Seguro An Kabertura amplia.
Brand Bonus polis ta duna bo bonus riba bo prima di seguro pa komensá tur e añanan kabi na
o pago prima pa bo seguro di kumdela. Anla na ta importa na bus kompeno bo total, segun e
kumpli al ta Promie Seguro se fin.
informa bo tambe. Na Promie Seguro - Scherlooeweg 15 - Tel 61 19 14 (sábado y Vrijdag)

Their translation is as follows:

- (a) You want to sell your Japanese car? You want a good price? Come by today at: Rooi Catootje Auto Park, and we'll buy it for CASH on the spot!
- (b) Caracas, every weekend! 3 days/3 nights. Departure (Thursday night). Return (Sunday morning). 4 days/4 nights. Departure (Wednesday night). Return (Sunday morning).
... Adults (2 or 3 in a bedroom) 248/263 Antillean guilders. Return ticket by plane. Tips for the porter at the airport and the hotel. Transport by bus airport/hotel/airport. Stay in the Plaza Cathedral hotel. Call us right now at ...

- (c) Have you already heard of the Brand Bonus Polis? Brand Bonus Polis is the new policy introduced by Prome Seguro with wide coverage. Brand Bonus polis gives you a bonus on your insurance premium to compensate all the years you have paid a premium for your fire insurance. So it does not matter with which company you were insured. Remember that only Prome Seguro has got it. Get our information. At Prome Seguro ... (near the Viaduct).

Notice the use of English loans (pronounced as in Dutch), such as *kèsh*, *wikènt*, and *tips*, and the coexistence of the non-adapted Dutch loan *Brand Bonus Polis* and the adapted loan *polis* '(insurance) policy'. *Pasashi* 'ticket' has the French form (presumably via Dutch) but the meaning of Spanish *pasaje*. Much of the vocabulary is very similar to Spanish, such as *salida* 'departure' and *regreso* 'return' or even a direct loan such as *ida i buelta* 'return, round trip'. In other cases the relation with Spanish and Portuguese is less direct, e.g. *djaweps* for 'Thursday' (<Sp. *(día) jueves*) and *djarason* 'Wednesday', where Spanish has *miércoles*.

17.2 Sound system

The best information on the Papiamentu sound system can be gathered from the work of Römer (e.g. 1992, which contains a posthumous synthesis of his work).

There are ten vowels in Papiamentu, which can be presented as in (1) (spelling given in parentheses):

- (1)
- | | | |
|------|-------|------|
| i | y(ii) | u |
| e | ø(ú) | o |
| ɛ(ê) | | o(b) |
| | a | |

There are 24 consonant phonemes, as in:

- (2)
- | | | | | |
|---|------|---------|------|---|
| p | t | tʃ(ch) | k | |
| b | d | dʒ(dj) | g | |
| f | s | ʃ(sh) | x(g) | h |
| m | n | ɲ | | |
| | l, r | | | |
| w | | j(ɣ, j) | | |

There are two main stress patterns in Papiamentu, penultimate and ultimate. Penultimate

stress is the regular pattern for words ending in vowels or in *-er*, *-el*, *-en* (where *e* represents a schwa rather than a full vowel): *kuminda* 'food', *korda* 'remember', *liber* 'free'. Words ending in any other speech sound generally have stress on the last syllable: *kantor* 'office', *kunason* 'heart', *rober* 'wrong'. The largest group of exceptions consists of verbs of three or four syllables, which are distinguished from other words of the same length by the fact that they are always stressed on the final syllable; this is indicated in Papiamentu orthography by means of an acute accent: *kuminda'* 'greet', *ekiboka'* 'make a mistake'. There is also a sizable number of bisyllabic exceptions, such as *doló* 'pain', *muhé* 'woman', *mashá* 'a lot', *piská* 'fish'.

Römer (1992) describes tonal phenomena in Papiamentu. We find level high and low tones, which in many – but by no means all – cases correspond to accented and unaccented syllables, respectively. A major class of exceptions is formed by the bisyllabic verbs. These have a Low High pattern with the Low tone realised on the accented syllable, as in *pone* 'to put', *kwèndè* 'to wind', *laba* 'wash'. There are minimal pairs such as *papa* 'porridge; the Pope' with a High Low pattern, and *papa* 'dad' with a Low High tonal pattern (Römer 1992). Joubert (1991) lists 251 pairs of bisyllabic words which can be distinguished only by their tone patterns. In the vast majority of these cases (+230), a Low High pattern over a bisyllabic word is a verb, a High Low pattern is a noun: *biaba* [Low High] 'to travel'/[High Low] 'voyage', *warda* [Low High] 'to wait, to keep, to guard'/[High Low] 'guard service, guard post'. However, the tone alternation cannot be purely the result of a derivational rule (e.g. nominalization through tonal shift). For some 85 of these pairs, there is no lexical relationship between the verb and the noun: *sala* [Low High] 'to salt'/[High Low] 'living room', *para* [Low High] 'to stand, to stop'/[High Low] 'bird'.

17.3 Morphology and lexicon

The best recent survey of Papiamentu morphology is Dijkhoff (1993), a work primarily devoted to nominal compounds and lexicalized syntactic formations. Dijkhoff shows that constructions which at first sight seem syntactic or phrasal in nature, of the type *N di N' N* of *N'*, in fact have many lexical characteristics. They may undergo reduction processes, as in *lens'i saku* (< kerchief of pocket) 'handkerchief', and often have a specialized or shifted meaning, as in *kabé'i boto* (< head of boat) 'the front part of a boat; lift'.

Among the affixes, there are cases where the element is only borrowed in conjunction with a set of lexical items, with which it is combined already in the donor language. Examples include Spanish suffixes in Papiamentu (Dijkhoff 1993) such as *-shon* (< Sp. *-ción*) in *akumula-shon* 'accumulation' and *akusa-shon* 'accusation'. From these cases no evidence for productive morphology can be distilled. Cases in which an affix is borrowed include Papiamentu *-dó* (< Sp. *-dor*), cf. (3a). It can be applied freely to recipient language items (3b), and is not restricted in its application (3c):

- (3) a. pèrdè-dó 'loser' (from Spanish)
 warda-dó 'keeper, guard'
 b. uza-dó 'user' (newly formed)
 traha-dó 'worker'
 lubida-dó 'absent-minded'
 c. hūr-dó 'tenant' (from a Dutch base)

Like *-dó*, *-mentu*, as in the name of the language itself, is a highly productive affix, and not restricted to Spanish/Portuguese bases.

The particle *nan* is used to pluralize nouns and noun phrases (see also chapter 21). It is used particularly with definite noun phrases, and is a clitic rather than a true affix.

17.4 Syntax

17.4.1 Basic word order

The basic word order in Papiamentu is not unlike that of other creole languages:

- (4) Su - TMA - Verb - IO - DO - PP

The indirect object precedes the direct object both with full noun phrases, as in (5a), and with pronouns, as in (5b,c):

- (5) a. Maria a duna Wanchu un buki.
 Mary TNS give John a book
 'Mary gave John a book.'
 b. Maria a dunami un buki.
 'Mary gave me a book.'
 c. Maria a dunami e.
 'Mary gave me it.'

Notice that here Papiamentu permits the order IO - DO, which is prohibited in Spanish and Portuguese.

The category TMA will be discussed in 17.4.4. There is one deviation here from (4), since the *bo* 'future' precedes rather than follows the subject pronoun. This optional alternate order is possible only with *mi* 'I', *bo* 'you', and *e* 'she/he/it'. The same phenomenon occurs with the future marker *bai* and the personal pronouns *mi* and *yu* in Tok Pisin.

- (6) Lo mi laga e buki pa bo den e kas.
 FUT 1SG leave the book for 2SG in the house
 'I will leave the book for you in the house.'

When there is a preposed locative or temporal phrase, it is possible to switch the order of subject and verb. Both (a) and (b) are grammatical:

- (7) a. Riba e isla aki un mion hende ta biba.
 'On this island a million people live.'
 b. Riba e isla aki ta biba un mion hende.
 'On this island live a million people.'

There is a verb + particle construction that seems limited to the verbs *bai* 'come' and *bini* 'go' and the particle *bèk* (<Eng. *back*):

- (8) Wanchu a bini kas bèk
 'John has come back home.'

However, sometimes Dutch particle constructions, such as *bel ... op* 'telephone', are borrowed:

- (9) Lo mi bèl bo op.
 FUT 1SG call 2SG up.
 'I will call you.'

17.4.2 The copula

In contrast with other creole languages, Papiamentu has a clearly defined set of adjectives, which can occur in attributive, and in predicative position preceded by a copula. The following examples show that the locative, (10), predicative, (11)-(13), and presentational or equative, (14), functions of the copula are all fulfilled by the same explicit copula *ta*, no matter whether the predicate is a noun phrase, prepositional phrase, or adjective:

- (10) Mi ta na kas. 'I am in the house.'
 (11) Mi ta Pedro. 'I am Pedro.'
 (12) Mi ta un yu di Korsow. 'I am a native son / an islander / a Curaçaoer.'
 (13) Mi ta grandi. 'I am big.'
 (14) Esaki ta Maria. 'This is Mary.'

However, we will see below that the existential copula is not *ta* but *tin* (where Portuguese has *tem* and Spanish *hay*).

17.4.3 Passive and fronting rules

Papiamentu is unique among Caribbean creoles in having a passive construction similar to that found in the European lexifiers, i.e. one in which the agent is optionally realised in a PP (introduced by *dor di* or *pa*, a passive auxiliary appears (*wordu* or *ser*, in free variation), and the verb appears in the passive participle form. The passive with the auxiliary *wordu* is illustrated in (15), which contains a realisation of the agent in a *dor di*-phrase.

- (15) *È pòrrèt aki a wordu saká dor di e mucha hòmbèr.*
 the picture here PASS be taken through of the child male
 'This picture was taken by the boy.'

Participle forms are formed in two distinct ways, following a so-called Iberian and a Dutch pattern.

- (16) Iberian pattern: *morde* 'bite' - *mordí* 'bitten', *dividi* 'divide' - *dividí* 'divided', *barka* 'rake' - *barká* 'raked', *papu* 'relieve oneself / dirty by excrement' - *papú* 'dirtied by excrement'
 (17) Dutch pattern: *ferf* 'paint' - *beférf* 'painted', *wèldèr* / *wèldro* 'weld' - *bewèldèr* / *bewèldro* 'welded', *tren* 'train' - *betren* 'trained', *dal* 'hit' - *bedal* 'hit'

Apart from passive, there are three types of fronting in Papiamentu (see chapter 24). First, it is possible to focus on noun phrases or prepositional phrases, often but not necessarily preceded by *ta*. An example is (18):

- (18) *Ta e buki m'a dunabu.* (Cleft)
 FOC the book 1SG=PASS give=2SG
 'I gave you the BOOK.'

One of the advertisements has an example of subject focus:

- (19) *Korda si ta Prome Seguro so tin-e.*
 remember if FOC Prome Seguro alone have=3SG
 'Remember: only Prome SEGURO has it.'

Frequently, though not obligatorily, and without much of a change in meaning, questioned constituents are focused:

- (20) (Ta) kiko bo tin den bo man?
 FOC what 2SG have in 2SG hand
 'What (is it that/do) you have in your hand?'

In a second type of structure, the verb is fronted and repeated:

- (21) Ta duna m'a dunabu e buki. (Predicate cleft)
 FOC give 1SG=PAST give=2SG the book
 'I GAVE you the book.'

However, it is possible to include an emphatic adverb with the fronted predicate:

- (22) Ta djis fia m'a fiabo e buki.
 FOC just lend 1SG-PAST lend=2SG the book
 'I have just lent you the book (not given it).'

In the third construction a noun phrase or prepositional phrase is fronted without focusing it, and without *ta*:

- (23) Un dia mi tabata kana na Punda.
 One day 1SG PAST-PR walk LOC Punda
 'One day I was walking downtown Willemstad.'

Here the fronted element is interpreted as background information or as an already established topic. Construction (23) is distinguished from a focus construction through its intonation.

The focus element *ta* resembles the copula, and it may be negated, but not modified for TMA, and neither can the object pronoun be included:

- (24) a. No ta duna m'a dunabu e buki.
 NEG FOC give 1SG=PAST give=2SG the book
 'I didn't GIVE you the book.'
- b. *tabata e buki mi tabata dunabu
 PAST-PR the book 1SG PAST=PR give=2SG
- c. *ta dunabu m'a dunabu e buki
 FOC give=2SG 1SG=PAST give=2SG the book

17.4.4 TMA and gerundive clauses

The Papiamentu TMA system is not quite like that of other Caribbean creoles. It has been described in great detail by Maurer (1988) and Andersen (1990). There are basically five TMA markers, with roughly the meanings indicated:

- | | | |
|------|---------------|--|
| (25) | <i>ta</i> | present, progressive |
| | <i>tabata</i> | imperfective past (<i>Aruba has <i>sewata</i></i>) |
| | <i>a</i> | perfective, past |
| | <i>lo</i> | future, potential |
| | <i>sa</i> | habitual |

While often *a* is interpreted as past (and glossed as such here), its aspectual rather than tense character is clear in examples such as:

- (26) *M'a kasi kla.*
 1SG=Past almost ready
 'I am almost done.'

In addition to the distinction between two kinds of past tense, there is the striking feature of a gerundive system. In (27) this participle is overtly expressed with the marker *-nda*:

- (27) *E ta kana bai bini [papiando den djé mes].*
 'He walks back and forth talking to himself.'

This suffix can be attached to many verbs. However, the participle can also be expressed by the combination *ta* + verb in a number of constructions. Consider first perception complements:

- (28) *E-la weta un homber yongotá ei bou [ta saka awa ku un makutu].*
 3SG=Past see a man kneel there down PR take water with a bucket
 'He saw a man kneeling (lit. knelt) down below taking out water with a bucket.'
 (Andersen 1990)

With telic verbs, the absence of *ta* in perception complements implies that the completion of the act is witnessed, according to Maurer (1988: 267), citing unpublished work by Muller. Consider the contrast in (29):

- (29) a. M'a miré kap e palu.
'I saw him cut the tree (including the moment the tree fell down).'
b. M'a miré ta kap e palu.
'I saw him cutting the tree (but not necessarily also the final result of the act of cutting).'

Some verbs take a *ta* complement:

- (30) a. E-l-a bin ta trata nan malu. (Andersen 1990)
'He started treating them badly.'
b. E-l-a kumísá ta kome djente. (Maurer 1988: 262)
'He started grinding his teeth.'

A third context is adverbial clauses:

- (31) Kuantu aña nan tin [ta kana tre'i dokter].
'How many years have they been [running after doctors]?'

Finally, there is a type of relative clause using this form:

- (32) ... e plantashi ta yen di hende [ta kòrta i piki tabaku].
'... the plantation was full of people [cutting and picking tobacco].' (Maurer 1988: 264)

The relationship between constructions with *ta* and constructions with *-ndo* requires much further analysis; sometimes they appear to be interchangeable, but not always.

17.4.5 Serial verbs

Some kinds of serial verbs are extremely frequent in the language, but the total range is more limited than in some other Caribbean creoles, like those of Surinam, it appears. Particularly frequent are cases where the second verb indicates a direction for the action of the first verb:

- (33) Cha Tiger a hala stul pone na mesa.
Cha Tiger PAST drag chair put LOC table
'Cha Tiger dragged a chair to the table.' (Baart 1983: 142)
- (34) Mi ta lastrabo bai fiernu.
1SG PR drag=2SG go hell
'I drag you to hell.' (Baart 1983: 78)

- (39) a. Ta bende flor.
PR sell flower
'Flowers are sold (here).'
- b. *Flor ta bende.

With expletive, semantically empty, subjects lexical elements are prohibited:

- (40) a. Tin baliamentu.
there.is dance
'There is a dance.'
- b. *Nan tin baliamentu
3PL there.is dance

The same holds for weather verbs, except when a (restricted) lexical subject is used, as in (41c):

- (41) a. Tabata yobe.
PAST-PR rain
'It rained.'
- b. *E tabata yobe.
- c. Awa tabata yobe
water PAST-PR
'It rained water.'

The different classes of null subjects can occur in subordinate contexts as well, as shown by the grammaticality of (42)-(43):

- (42) Mi ta kere (ku) ta bende sapatu ei.
1SG PR believe (that) PR sell shoes there
'I believe they sell shoes there.'
- (43) Mi ta haña (ku) ta muchu lat pa nos bai.
1SG PR think (that) COP very late for 1PL go
'I think it is too late for us to go.'

When its subject is extracted out of an embedded complement clause of a verb such as *kere* 'believe', the trace is null. This is what we mentioned in chapter 11 as a violation of the [that trace] filter:

- (44) Ken bo ta kere (ku) ____ ta parse mi tata?
'Who do you believe (that) ____ resembles my father?

A second issue is the status of object pronouns. It is clear that they are phonologically attached to the verb, as we saw already. Further examples are:

- (45) Bo a dunami e buki.
 2SG PAST give=1SG the book
 'You have given me the book.'
- (46) Nos lo kumpré kèsh mesora.
 we FUT buy-it cash right away
 'We will buy it from you for cash right away.'

Ordinarily, there is no special form for the object pronoun:

(47)	<i>subject</i>	<i>object</i>	<i>pos.</i>
	mi	mi	mi
	bo	bo/bu	bo
	e	e	su
	nos	nos	nos
	bosnan	bosnan	boso(nan)
	nan	nan	nan

The apparent exception is the second person, which in Curaçao Papiamentu becomes *bu*:

- (48) Mi ta mirabu.
 'I am looking at you.'

In perception complements, where it is really the subject of the complement clause, we have *bu* as well:

- (49) Mi ta mirabu ta sali.
 1SG PR see=1SG PR leave
 'I see you leaving.'

This shows that the effect is in part phonological: it has to do with the fact that *bo* is a clitic on the preceding verb. Notice that *bo* does not cliticize onto the verb when it is a possessive pronoun in a noun phrase:

- (50) Mi ta mira [bo tata].
 1SG PR see 2SG father
 'I see your father.'

Nor does it cliticize onto the verb when it is the subject of a finite complement clause:

- (51) Mi ta kere [bo parse mi tata].
 1SG PR believe 1SG resemble 1SG father
 'I believe you resemble my father.'

Nonetheless, there is some reason to assume that there are syntactic object clitics in Papiamentu, but only with specific reflexive verbs. Consider the following contrast:

- (52) a. Mi ta sinti mi/mi mes un tiki tristu.
 'I feel a bit sad.'
 b. Mi ta sinti *mi/mi mes dor di e deken.
 'I feel myself through the blanket.'

When used with an experiencer interpretation as in (52a), meaning 'to have a certain feeling', *sinti* + object pronoun is acceptable. When used with an agent interpretation as in (52b), meaning 'to feel a texture', it is not, presumably because of Principle B of the Binding Theory (Chomsky 1981) which states that pronouns must be referentially free, i.e. not anaphorical, in their domain. Thus ordinarily bare pronouns cannot be used reflexively.

We will assume that the *sinti+mi* version of (52a) has the structure in (53), where *mi* is a clitic and is linked to an empty anaphoric element in the predicate:

- (53) Mi ta sinti+mi [(null anaphor) un tiki tristu].
 1SG PR feel+1SG [... a bit sad]

Further reading

Although Papiamentu is a well-known and relatively well-described language, there is no standard work in English that deals with the full complexities of the language. Maurer (1988) deals with tense, mood, and aspect in great detail. Dijkhoff (1993) is a detailed study of nominal morphology. Kouwenberg & Murray (1994) is a useful general sketch.